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[778] Moreover, twenty-five percent of the native Belorussian population professed Catholicism, while seventy-five percent was Orthodox. Even before the revolution the Catholic priests, and they were almost all Poles, made propaganda in the Catholic churches to the effect that all who professed Catholicism were Poles. As a matter of fact these "Poles" had not even mastered the Polish language and were Belorussian by nationality. In the heyday of the nationalities policy, the Polish Communists, perhaps only for reasons of propaganda and of course under the auspices and with the permission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, renamed the whole Koydanovskiy Rayon, which is situated on the Polish-Belorussian boundary and has a Belorussian population of some thirty thousand, the Polish National Rayon. Kaydanov (sic), the rayon center, was renamed Dzerzhinsk and the whole rayon called Dzerzhinskiy. In the rayon center, on the square dedicated to the fierce, even though dead, chief of the rayon, a monument was erected to Dzerzhinskii which portrayed him standing straight up on a pedestal in a full-length soldier's overcoat and with a long face and a small beard. In the National Rayon compulsory promulgation of the Polish language was begun, a measure which the population had difficulty in comprehending. All institutions, schools, and village reading-rooms were changed over to Polish and the rayon newspaper came out in Polish. The population was mystified by these newly-created difficulties. After 1930, all the efforts to organize the Polish National Rayon in the name of Dzerzhinskii were pronounced a diversion of Polish spies. The higher leaders and organizers of the rayon were arrested and punished severely. Such a fate also overtook the Shestakovskiy Polish Soviet, named after the Polish communist Markhlevskii, in the Kopyl' Rayon, Minsk Oblast'. The Dzerzhinskiy Rayon retained the name of its chief and was once again called a Belorussian rayon. Both the village soviet and the local population of this ill-fated region were punished, almost one half of the population finding itself in Siberia eventually. Thus the completely innocent local populace paid dearly for the nationalities policy.

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563 Second Division in Minsk and the Thirty-third in Mogilev, for example, were renamed Belorussian territorial divisions in 1927. These two divisions were recruited exclusively in Belorussia -- it was intended to change the commands and the training into Belorussian in as short a period as possible. To prepare a staff of officers half the